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28 March 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Vietnam Bibliography

Pulling together an unclassified bibliography on Vietnam for a serious but non-specialist reader is not an easy task, primarily because there is relatively little material available which is both reasonably comprehensive and not excessively (even if disguisedly) partisan or axe-grinding. The following is the best short list I can come up with:

(1) The Emancipation of French Indo-China, by Donald Lancaster (Oxford, 1961). A basic must for anyone seriously interested in the Vietnam problem. Lancaster has his prejudices (as do we all), but being British and neither way right nor way left of center, Lancaster's prejudices produce a minimum of misleading distortion. The book is mis-titled since it is really a one-volume history of Vietnam from the beginnings of the Vietnamese people through the end of the Franco-Viet Minh war, with emphasis on twentieth century and, particularly, post-World War II developments. For perspective, background and an analysis of the historical forces that shape present-day politics and struggles in Vietnam, it is unsurpassed. It is also very readable.

(2) The Two Viet-Nam's: A Political and Military History, by Bernard Fall (2nd ed., Praeger, 1966). This is the closest approximation extant to a comprehensive history of post-1954 North and South Vietnam. Fall is a serious, reasonably scholarly writer but sometimes a disingenuous one. A reader should never forget that Fall was a Frenchman.

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(3) From Colonialism to Communism, by Hoang Van Chi (Praeger, 1958). Another must. Chi, an ex-Viet Minh cadre, describes dispassionately and factually what the Vietnamese Communists actually did with political power once they acquired it, first over "liberated areas" in the 1951-1954 period and then, after 1954, over all of North Vietnam. He explains the "land rent reduction" and "land reform" programs which many currently fashionable writers -- DeVillers, Lacouture, Joseph Kraft and even Fall -- prefer to ignore.

(4) Communism in North Vietnam, by P. J. Honey (M. I. T., 1963). A short, well written volume useful as a corrective to Fall.

(5) The Last Confucian, by Denis Warner (Penguin, 1964). A very readable, reasonably objective survey of the Diem era and the rise of the Communist insurgency in South Vietnam.

(6) "The Real Revolution in South Vietnam," by George A. Carver, Jr., Foreign Affairs, April 1965. Included not because I wrote it, but because it is the only brief resume of the 1954-1965 period and summary analysis of Vietnamese political dynamics that I am aware of.

(7) "The Faceless Viet Cong," by George A. Carver, Jr., Foreign Affairs, April 1966. Included because it is a summary resume of the origins, nature and structure of the insurgent movement, not because I wrote it.

(8) Viet Cong, by Douglas Pike (M. I. T., 1966). A detailed study and compendium of documents. This book is not easy reading but is solid and can be very profitably skimmed or dipped into.

(9) The Other War in Vietnam - A Progress Report (AID, 1966). This is Komer's report on "the other war." It accentuates the positive, but does give the reader a good feel for the range and scope of programs now in train.

(10) Summary, objective and unclassified analyses of current developments are hard to come by. One good one is a 4 October 1966 piece (untitled) by Richard C. Hottelet of CBS. I do not know how available

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it would be, however, since the only copy I have seen is attached to a 17 October 1966 "Dear Dick" letter to you. Overall, the best serious journalist writing on Vietnam is Robert Shaplen. He had good, useful pieces in the 1 October 1966 ("Letter from Saigon"), 17 December 1966 ("Reporter at Large") and 18 February 1967 ("Letter from Saigon") issues of the New Yorker.

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